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May 22, 2014

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to you today regarding the ongoing crisis within the Department of Veterans Affairs. As Ranking Member on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, I am committed to taking every single action necessary to immediately address the systemic failures plaguing the VA, and to improve services for our veterans. I am hopeful that you will use your executive authority to immediately implement several critical changes to the VA senior executive performance management system. It is my firm belief that implementing these changes can lead to better outcomes for our veterans. I am asking you to:

- Require the establishment of organizational goals and expected outcomes for veterans, and tie progress on these goals to the annual performance reviews of each senior executive.
- Require senior executives not meeting their goals to receive a detailed remedial plan with concrete actions that can be taken to improve performance.
- Ensure these strengthened performance guidelines apply to both Senior Executive Service members and Title 38 employees within the VA – so we are covering the entire breadth of VA leadership.
- Ensure that accountability authorities currently afforded the Secretary are streamlined and utilized when warranted, and that supervisors who wish to take disciplinary action are supported.

Enacting these immediate reforms will help us strike at the core of the many accountability failings we are seeing within the VA. These reforms allow us not only to hold individuals responsible when they don't meet expectations, but most importantly, they allow us to identify and solve problems that would otherwise harm veterans.

Mr. President, our veterans deserve the absolute best. Now more than ever, all of us – Democrats and Republicans alike – must come together and lead. I sincerely hope you will consider acting through Executive Order to bring about many of the badly needed reforms outlined above.

Sincerely,

Michael H. Michaud
Member of Congress